

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
87R5350 MP-D

H.B. 1444
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Local Government
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Engrossed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

In Texas, candidates for sheriff who are not licensed peace officers have a certain amount of time to become a licensed peace officer after their election to office. However, there have been instances where a newly elected sheriff was unable to meet the qualifications to become a peace officer, hindering their ability to fulfill one of the primary duties of a sheriff, enforcing criminal law. H.B. 1444 seeks to ensure that a candidate for sheriff has the proper experience and training in law enforcement before serving as sheriff by requiring candidates to hold an active permanent peace officer license.

H.B. 1444 amends current law relating to qualifications of a sheriff or a candidate for sheriff.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority previously granted to the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement is rescinded in SECTION 3 (Section 85.0025, Local Government Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 85.0011, Local Government Code, as follows:

Sec. 85.0011. New heading: QUALIFICATIONS FOR SHERIFF OR CANDIDATE FOR SHERIFF. (a) Creates this subsection from existing text. Provides that a person is not eligible to serve as sheriff unless the person meets certain criteria, including holding an active permanent peace officer license under Chapter 1701 (Law Enforcement Officers), Occupations Code, rather than being eligible to be licensed under Sections 1701.309 (Age Requirement) and 1701.312 (Disqualification: Felony Conviction or Placement on Community Supervision), Occupations Code.

(b) Provides that a person is not eligible to be a candidate for the office of sheriff unless the person holds an active permanent peace officer license under Chapter 1701, Occupations Code.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 1701.302(a), Occupations Code, to require an officer, rather than an officer, including a sheriff, elected under the Texas Constitution or a statute or appointed to fill a vacancy in an elective office, except as provided by Section 85.0011, Local Government Code, to obtain a license from the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement not later than the second anniversary of the date the officer takes office.

SECTION 3. Repealer: Section 85.0025 (Continuing Education), Local Government Code.

SECTION 4. Provides that the changes in law made by this Act to Sections 85.0011 and 85.0025, Local Government Code, do not apply to a sheriff serving a term that began before the effective date of this Act. Provides that a sheriff serving a term that began before the effective date of this Act is governed for the remainder of that term by Sections 85.0011 and 85.0025, Local Government Code, as those laws existed immediately before the effective date of this Act, and the prior law is continued in effect for that purpose.

SECTION 5. Effective date: September 1, 2021.